

Exhibit 6

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Group will publish names of partner-rights opponents

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OLYMPIA – Petitions were being printed Tuesday for Referendum 71, which asks Washington voters to overturn a new law granting same-sex domestic partners many of the rights of spouses.

But those who sign the petitions may be in for a surprise. Some R-71 opponents have put up a Web site – www.whosigned.org (<http://www.whosigned.org>) – where they intend to post the names of all the required 120,577 signers.

"We think that it will help neighbors talk to each other," said Brian Murphy, 45, a Seattle resident who helped create the site.

Referendum 71 organizers say the tactic is way over the line.

"It's intimidation, there's no question about it," said Gary Randall, president of the Faith and Freedom Network, one of the groups backing the measure.

Randall scoffed at the idea that the site will help foster conversations over backyard fences.

"It's a lie," he said. "... They may want to get to know their neighbors who disagree with them, but not to have a friendly conversation."

Murphy, who is gay, says it's undecided whether the Web site will list addresses. But he dismissed worries about harassment as overblown. Unlike a ballot, he said, "signing a petition is a public act."

It's signed in public, and the signature-gatherers and subsequent signers see signers' names and addresses, he said.

"It's very clear that there's no expectation of privacy there," Murphy said. Also, he points out, the state has posted an online list of the thousands of couples who have become domestic partners.

Petition signers could have their names and other information published by the Web site only after the petitions are verified by the Secretary of State's Office. At that point, the signed petitions are public records.

But even some fellow opponents of the referendum are uncomfortable with the plan to publicize signers' names.

"We did ask them not to put the site up," said Josh Friedes, a spokesman for Equal Rights Washington. "I have concerns that the Web site can be perceived as hostile or intimidating, and that's just not helpful."

R-71 opponents, who recently organized as Washington Families Standing Together, are trying to make the case that the law protects loving, committed partners and their families.

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"We think the Web site may make it harder to have these conversations," Friedes said. If organizers can get enough signatures by late July, R-71 would likely be the highest-profile measure on the ballot. It asks voters to throw out a new law giving domestic partners virtually all the rights and responsibilities of married couples under state law.

Randall says that creates de facto marriage. Proponents disagree, noting that another state law clearly specifies that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

Opponents of the measure say they're planning to run a \$2 million to \$3 million campaign if R-71 makes it on the ballot.

Similar battles in other states have led gay-rights groups to publicize the names of political donors and petition signers. The Massachusetts-based gay rights group Knowthyneighbor.org has posted more than half a million names of petition signers in Massachusetts, Florida and Arkansas.

"These petition signers need to stand behind their signatures and be responsible for this dehumanizing attack on the gay community," Know They Neighbor's director, Tom Lang, said in April. Some donors to last year's Proposition 8, a California ban on same-sex marriage, faced boycotts, stolen yard signs, and vandalism of their homes and cars.

Some Mormons helping promote R-71 are "still raw to what happened in California," Randall said. "They're still being harassed to this day."

State elections director Nick Handy said he's unhappy with the idea of discouraging participation by publicizing names from the petitions.

"A vigorous debate on the issues is always welcomed, but efforts to intimidate or repress participation are not," he said in a written statement. "It just doesn't feel like the culture we have here in the state of Washington."

The more than 10,000 petitions needed will include names, signatures and home addresses.

"Nobody is comfortable with releasing personal information in situations like this, but it (is) part of transparency in government," Handy said. "We hope people will keep their cool."

Despite some strong criticism of the plan, Murphy said he has no intention of taking down the Web site. He understands the feedback from people who are urging a less confrontational approach, he said. But he said the stakes – hundreds of spouse-type rights in a November vote – are too high to turn back.

"Imagine that it was your family's rights that were being affected, and that you had to wait," he said. "What would you do?"

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